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The Western Abenakis of Vermont, 1600-1800: War, Migration, and the Survival of an Indian People. By Colin G. Calloway.

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testimony that the oil industry would be unlikely and unable to keep its promises of a pristine, unspoiled environment.

The epilogue of the book provides updated information on the economic and legal circumstances affecting Eskimo communities, including some of the changes made in the ANCSA legislation since 1971. These changes include amendments designed to protect Eskimo interests when their corporate stock goes public in 1991. However, legal and judicial interpretations of the law still can prove harmful to native communities. As an example, Jorgensen cites a recent case where the residents of Gambell, fearing adverse effects on their marine resources, tried to stop oil exploration and drilling in Norton Sound. After a series of appeals, some of which favored the natives, the United States Supreme Court held that the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) literally concerned land and not water. The act thus stripped Gambell residents, "almost all of whom gain almost all of their daily sustenance from the resources of the sea" (p. 295), of any environmental protection whatsoever. The future is, indeed, uncertain.

Oil Age Eskimos would be an excellent book to use in a course focusing on Arctic peoples, or on Alaska history and contemporary issues. I also would recommend it for environmentalists who want (and need) to understand better how native peoples are affected by ecological changes and crises, and how they, in turn, exert their own influence on the environment, particularly how they try to manage natural resources in productive but sustainable fashion. And finally, would it be too much to hope that legislators and policymakers, corporations, and the president of the United States might read this book to enlighten themselves about the severe impacts their behavior has had on the ecology and native peoples in the northern wilderness?

Kathleen A. Dahl
Washington State University

The Western Abenakis of Vermont, 1600-1800: War, Migration, and the Survival of an Indian People. By Colin G. Calloway. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990. 346 pages. \$29.95 Cloth.

This is another rediscovery of a tribe that was supposed to have disappeared from the face of the earth in the nineteenth century and is now suing for federal recognition. The existence and importance of the Western Abenakis were not disputed before the American Revolution, although, as Colin Calloway makes clear, New Englanders' conceptions of these Indians strayed far from accuracy. Writers of war propaganda were not concerned about accuracy. Calloway penetrates the propaganda to present a complete and believable picture of a much-maligned and little-understood people. He has used a great variety of sources—local, national, and international, as well as traditional—and has handled them with a mastery that commands respect.

The Western Abenakis of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries occupied a territory between the colonies of France and England, from lakes George and Champlain to the Atlantic. It included all of Vermont and New Hampshire, a big area within Maine, and part of the Connecticut Valley within Massachusetts' claims. Because their territory lay between the empires, the peoples of this region formed a frontier of a distinct sort incompatible with Turnerian notions of a line between "civilization" and "savagery." Calloway shows French and English traders as well as French missionaries and a few settlers from both sides mingling constantly with the Indians throughout the region. There were indeed *legal* lines of jurisdiction and property, which the Indians enforced against encroachment so long as they were able. Necessarily, they were thrown into opposition to the expansionist English, and into alliance with the French. Calloway shows how they resisted successfully for nearly two centuries against great odds, and why they eventually lost.

The Western Abenakis were aided in their survival by the flexible structure of their society, in which bands consulted each other but managed their own affairs independently. Normally, in peacetime, families based themselves in home villages and moved about cyclically between subsistence resources. In time of war, "front line" bands retreated to the safe interior, which for many meant French missions, returning later to their home villages. New Englanders deluded themselves repeatedly that the Western Abenakis had disappeared; the French knew better. (Happily, Calloway has consulted many French sources.)

The soils of this region are thin and marginally productive. Although the Western Abenakis cultivated the land, their normal

subsistence involved heavy reliance on hunting for trade, and they established their villages at strategic places on trade routes. In wartime these instantly became military routes. Advantage was offset by hazard for the people in the middle. Alliance dictated not only that the French would aid in the Abenakis' wars, but also that the Abenakis had to help in French wars against the English, which consumed thirty-three years of a seventy-four-year period. Much of the "savage" warfare of these Indians resulted from decisions made in "civilized" Paris and implemented through Christian missions, notably at St. Francis, Bécancour, and Missisquoi (Burlington, Vermont). Calloway insists that the Indians made their own decisions—they were not mere pawns on a French chessboard—but he concedes that decisions were made under conditions that left few rational options. Some individuals sided with the English—primarily, it seems, because of personal loyalties. For most Western Abenakis, the English were the encroaching enemy—land grabbers whose one redeeming feature was low prices for their trade goods. General alliance with the English was inconceivable, and French pressures made neutrality impossible. Some Indian families tried to hide in wartime, but subsistence required trade goods, and young warriors were more intent on proving their manhood than on using their heads. (The more things change. . . .)

This is not to say that the Western Abenakis were pacifists, only that they often had to fight in wars for imperial interests instead of their own. In the mid-seventeenth century, they had fought rampaging Mohawks to a draw, after which the Mohawks restricted themselves to diplomacy despite much bellicose encouragement from Massachusetts. One reason for the Mohawks' restraint was that, despite much loss from epidemic disease and casualties of war, the Western Abenakis seemed to renew their strength magically. Their secret was hospitality. In the frequent aggressive wars perpetrated by Massachusetts and Connecticut against neighboring Indians, fearful survivors fled to Abenaki sanctuary, where they stiffened resistance to English expansion.

In consequence, Western Abenaki villages harbored conglomerate populations. Although some married in, it does not appear that the refugees were immediately assimilated into Abenaki families. They retained remnant identification with their tribal origins, unlike the adopted captives in Iroquois families and tribes.

In those days, alliance with the French required acceptance of

French missionaries and adoption of their religion. As Catholics, therefore, the Western Abenakis acquired sacred as well as material sanctions for hostility to Puritan New England. They also were granted fallback refuges well within French territory in times of necessity. These mission sanctuaries became the objects of New England's most virulent hatred, which has been hotly perpetuated in such old tracts as Samuel Penhallow's *History of the Wars of New-England* and various semifictional effusions by the idolized Francis Parkman.

Because of the dominance of American historians trained at Harvard and Yale, where the faculties have accepted the Penhallow-Parkman orientation, the Western Abenakis generally have been scurrilously treated by historians. It is good to see a legitimate study from a conscientious, honest, and able scholar.

Francis Jennings
The Newberry Library

Ojibway Heritage and Ojibway Ceremonies. Both by Basil H. Johnston. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, Bison Book edition, 1990. 171 pages and 188 pages. Each \$7.95 Paper.

There are numerous books one might read that are about various American Indian tribal groups and their traditional or neo-traditional culture, beliefs, and practices. Most of these books were researched and written by prominent non-American Indian scholars over the years. Recently a number of new books by promising young non-American Indian scholars have been published. A large number of both the earlier and the more recently published books contain information which is, from the perspective of many American Indian peoples themselves, either of questionable validity or downright inaccurate! *Ojibway Heritage* and *Ojibway Ceremonies*, by Basil Johnston, are two notable exceptions.

These books provide sorely needed, accurate information about the Ojibway people's philosophical and religious beliefs and related ceremonies, as well as about aspects of traditional community life in general. The reader should note, by the way, that the tribal name *Ojibway* is also spelled *Ojibwe*. They usually are called *Chippewa* in the United States. The accurate information provided